

Farm & Market REPORT



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Commissioner's Column

Shoring Up the Cranberry Industry

by Jonathan L. Healy

Five years ago, who would have predicted the current difficulties in our Commonwealth's prized cranberry industry? Cranberry agricultural cash values have dropped precipitously from \$139 million to this year's \$38 million. Prices per barrel are down from \$60-\$70 levels to the \$10-\$20 level, levels far below our farmers' cost of producing cranberries.

Quite a few cranberry folks have had to dip into retirement savings, lay off employees, and get an off-farm job to support their family. Others have sold off sand, gravel, and land for building lots to make ends meet.

The cranberry industry, however, is vital to our Commonwealth. It still helps preserve over 60,000 acres of bogs and upland, contributes nearly a billion dollars of value-added business here, and is a vital part of our quality of life and heritage.

In spite of the angst in the cranberry farming community, we are all pitching in to do what we can to help. Jeff LaFleur of the Cape Cod Cranberry Grower's Association has done a terrific job in tireless efforts to find both federal and state assistance for the industry. SEMAP, the Southeast Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, has obtained preliminary funding to create ag business technical assistance to farmers in Southeastern Massachusetts. This program will be of huge assistance to the cranberry industry.

There is also the possibility of our Commonwealth receiving federal funding to help specialty crops such as cranberries, apples, fruits, and vegetables.

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Study Dispels Myths About Costs of Community Services to Farmland

MIDDLEBORO – The myth that farmland owners receive an unfair tax break when land is enrolled in Chapter 61A, the state's Current Use Taxation program, has been dispelled by an American Farmland Trust study of the cost of community services in the town of Middleborough, Mass. The study also dispelled the myth that residential development is the "highest and best" land use because it increases tax revenue.

The COCS study assessed the net fiscal contribution of the town's existing land uses, including residential development, businesses and industries, and farm, forest and open land. This study provides valuable insights into the current relationship between existing land uses and the local budget.

The study demonstrated that saving land saves money and that Middleborough's farm, forest and open lands subsidize the

higher costs of residential development. While residential development generated 85 percent of the town's income, because of its high demand on public services it created a net fiscal deficit. Farm, forest and open land, on the other hand, generated a 30 cent surplus for every dollar they contribute to town coffers.

The COCS study suggests that when making land use decisions, town officials should consider the net costs of development.

The COCS study was funded by the Mass. Department of Food and Agriculture, as part of a special grant to the UMass Cranberry Experiment Station, and the Town of Middleborough. Highlights of the study report have been published in a brochure available from the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association at 508-295-4895. ♦

Mass. Cranberry Production Forecast Down 16 Percent

The 2001 Massachusetts cranberry crop is forecast at 1.64 million barrels, down 16 percent from 2000 and 13 percent below 1999. Nationally, this year's cranberry crop is forecast at 5.58 million barrels, down one percent from 2000 and 12 percent below 1999. Wisconsin is the only state forecasting an increase from a year ago.

For the second year, the cranberry industry has a marketing order limiting the amount growers are allowed to sell for processing. For the 2001 crop year, growers can only sell 65 percent of their sales history to processors. Cranberries sold for fresh fruit are exempt from the regulation. These restrictions apply to all five of the major cranberry producing states.

The Cranberry Marketing Committee is responsible for calculating each grower's sales history. Due to the marketing restrictions many growers cut back on inputs or acres to reduce production and cut costs.

Massachusetts growers report that this year's crop had an above average bloom, an average fruit set and slightly above average fruit size. Many growers reported good weather during the pollination phase of the growing season and overall condition of their crop is good considering limited inputs to their bogs the past couple of years. Most growers continue to be concerned about the relatively low price expected for this year's crop. ♦

Local Companies Named for First-Ever “Best of Show” Awards at Massachusetts Marketplace 2001

DOVER, Mass. – Food industry executives and VIPs attending this year’s Massachusetts Marketplace, held August 24th at Elm Bank Reservation in Dover, voted for the event’s first-ever “Best of Show” awards.

Awards were presented for seven categories: Most Unique Product, Outstanding Product Line, Outstanding Packaging or Design, Most Distinctively-Massachusetts Product, Outstanding Fresh Product, Outstanding Packaged Product and Outstanding Salesmanship.

The Massachusetts Marketplace is a two-day outdoor exhibition of new, unusual and traditional Massachusetts produced agricultural, horticultural and specialty food products. Friday the Marketplace is open for the food trade to meet exhibitors and sample their products. Saturday the Marketplace is a public festival also featuring entertainment, gardening information, and children’s activities.

The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society sponsor the Massachusetts Marketplace.

“This year we instituted the ‘Best of Show’ awards to recognize exhibitors who display exemplary products and enthusiasm for the event,” explained Jonathan L. Healy,

Massachusetts Commissioner of Food and Agriculture. “The awards program also encourages buyers to evaluate and later recall the products they have sampled.”

The 2001 Massachusetts Marketplace “Best of Show” award winners are:

- Most Unique Product: **Aisha**, Roslindale, for products made from Termis, a legume with a unique nutty flavor including flavored Termis beans and dips.
- Outstanding Product Line: **Warren Farm and Sugarhouse**, North Brookfield, for their line of products including various grades of syrup in decorative glass bottles, maple mustard pickles and fruit spreads and jams.
- Outstanding Packaging or Design: **G&G Specialty Foods**, Wakefield, for their Ipswich Ale Mustard, a premium stone-ground mustard.
- Most Distinctively Massachusetts Product: **Carlson Orchards**, Harvard, for Carlson Orchard’s sparkling cider.
- Outstanding Fresh Product: **Hillman**

Farm, Colrain, for their aged natural rind and raw milk goat cheese.

- Outstanding Packaged Product: **Echoes of Summer**, Marlborough, for their certified organic and kosher fancy fruit spreads, fruit butters, preserves and chutneys.
- Outstanding Salesmanship and Enthusiasm: **Myron’s Fine Foods**, Orange. Chef Myron Becker makes Asian style cooking sauces. ♦

Pioneer Valley Recipe Booklet Published

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) announces the release of their newest publication, a recipe booklet that features local foods grown by farmers throughout the Pioneer Valley. It also includes some recipes from Local Hero campaign restaurants.

Recipes include: Roasted Tomato Sauce, Fresh Basil-Maple Vinaigrette, Pesto Butter for Sweet Corn, Blueberry Cordial and Smoky Chicken Burrito. The booklet also includes Interesting Farm Facts about agriculture in Massachusetts.

The recipe booklet will be distributed free of charge at all CISA events this Fall and is also available at the following Local Hero retail locations: Atkins Farms Country Market, Bread & Circus Whole Foods, Cornucopia Foods, Foster’s Supermarket, Green Fields Market, Leverett Coop, Randall’s Farm, Serio’s Market, State Street Fruit Store, and Stop & Shop-Hadley.

The recipe booklet encourages cooking using seasonal ingredients and also features recipes including both common and uncommon vegetables, berries and other farm products. The recipe booklet was produced by CISA and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and was partially funded by the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture.

For a free copy of “Favorite Recipes”, e-mail your name and address to farmhand@buylocalfood.com or call 413-559-5338, toll free at 1-877-623-6633. ♦

APR Program Has Record-Breaking Year

Thanks to unprecedented support for farmland protection from Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Secretary Bob Durand, along with the help of a number of partners, and the hard work of APR staff, Fiscal Year 2001 represented a record-breaking year for the APR Program in a number of areas.

The APR Program invested approximately \$13 million in FY01 in protecting 52 properties totaling approximately 4,800 acres. This is a record for the program in dollars invested and properties/acres protected in any one year. Secretary Durand has backed his commitment to agriculture with the funding necessary to protect it.

In addition, the U.S Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Farmland Protection Program awarded the

Commonwealth \$611,900 in matching funding that will assist in buying an additional 10 properties. To date, the FPP has provided four grants totaling \$2.4 million that went to protect 28 farm properties with 2,925 acres. Special thanks go to State Conservationist Cecil Currin and State Resource Conservationist Rick DeVergilio for their strong and effective advocacy in Washington, D.C. of the APR Program, and for their support of the APR Program’s efforts to protect farmland here in Massachusetts.

Finally, a number of land trusts around the state played critical roles in assisting with the acquisition of APRs, including the Franklin Land Trust, The Trustees of Reservations, Berkshire Natural Resource Council, American Farmland Trust, Deerfield Land Trust, Valley Land Fund, Kestrel Trust, Carlisle Land Trust, Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust, Hilltown Land Trust, and the Sudbury Valley Trustees. ♦

Top Bay State Tomatoes Named for 2001!

DOVER, Mass. -- Tomatoes from farms across Massachusetts competed for top honors in the 17th Annual Massachusetts Tomato Contest held Friday, August 24th at Elm Bank Reservation, Dover. The contest was held in conjunction with the 6th Annual Massachusetts Marketplace Festival, a two-day outdoor exhibition of new, unusual and traditional locally-produced food and horticultural products.

More than 60 tomato entries competed for first, second, or third place tomato awards in the slicing, cherry and/or heirloom categories. Trophies are awarded to the top three winners in each category and certificates are given to the top ten winners in each category.

For the first time ever, a yellow tomato placed second in the slicing category. This year's contest also saw the most entries in the heirloom category -- older, unusual varieties that are no longer widely grown by commercial growers. Heirloom varieties are gaining in popularity again, and include orange, rose, black and striped tomatoes.

A panel of judges, including food media, chefs and produce specialists, evaluated the entries from commercial growers on shape, color and flavor, with more value given to flavor.

Massachusetts is the largest tomato producing state in New England, growing some 56 million pounds of tomatoes annually with a farm-gate value of \$5.6 million. More than 500 acres are dedicated to tomato production in the Bay State which ranks 18th in tomato production nationwide.

The annual Massachusetts Tomato Contest is sponsored by the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets, the Massachusetts Association of Roadside Stands and the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture. The Massachusetts Marketplace is presented by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and the state agriculture department.

Massachusetts Tomato Contest Winners, 2001

SLICING CATEGORY

Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
Gove Farm	Leominster	Merced	1
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Lemon Boy	2
Blue Heron Farms	Franklin	Trust	3

CHERRY CATEGORY

Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
Red Fire Farm	Granby	Sun Gold	1
Red Fire Farm	Granby	Super Sweet 100	2
Warren Farm	N. Brookfield	Sweet 100	2
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Sun Cherry	3

HEIRLOOM CATEGORY

Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Black Krim	1
Warren Farm	N. Brookfield	Prince Borghese	2
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Jubilee	3
Wilson	Lexington	Cherokee Purple	3

HEAVIEST

Farm Name	Town	Variety	Weight (lbs)	Place
Gove Farm	Leominster	Merced	2.63	1
Arena Farm	Concord	Beefmaster	2.38	2
Simple Gifts Farm	Belchertown	Ruby Gold	2.18	3

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This funding could strengthen our campaigns to educate local consumers in buying local ag products. We might also use this federal funding to have state institutions and schools contract to buy more cranberry products directly from our co-ops and Massachusetts cranberry processors.

There certainly isn't any silver bullet out there that can compensate, in the short term, for the precipitous drops in cranberry prices. We are hopeful, however, that a lot of the little things that we are all trying to do will help our core cranberry industry folks weather the pricing storms and continue to farm in the year. ♦

Farmers Wanted for Petoerfest 2001

The Animal Rescue League of Boston will host its sixth annual Petoerfest to raise funds to support animals in need. Farmers are invited to be part of the festivities and sell their products. The event will be held Saturday, October 6th, at the League's Dedham facility. Among the activities for the day will be children's activities, games, music, food, crafts, and more. Spaces cost \$25 (\$10 extra for an additional table). For more information contact Britt Cronin at 617-426-9170, ext. 104. ♦

CLASSIFIED

Honey store tank (\$100), 2 cases cut comb plastic boxes/200ct., 55 cases/24 ct of 1/2 jars at \$5, 8 round comb frames, 4 boxes (12 1/2 lb) of medium foundation at \$25 ea. 413-786-1533.

Looking for work in the Mass. area. Agricultural technician-over 15yrs as a state programmer/coordinator of floriculture for the Brazilian gov. Have a wide-range of experience esp-/w-flowers-tropical plants-veg., pest and disease control, pesticides, greenhouse, marketing, computer skills up-to-date software. English & Portuguese speaking. Wagner Ribeiro, 978-443-6590 or e-mail: wkmribeiro@aol.com.

Looking for quality Pick-Your-Own apple bags? Empire Packaging Co. 800-562-5520.

Aquaculture recirculating system for sale. Fiberglass tanks, O2 generator, aeration, system and pumps, etc. 508-759-7060.

Pumpkins and miniature hay bales for sale: locally grown, excellent quality, delivered or picked up. Discounts on large quantities, satisfaction guaranteed. 978-264-4168.

For sale: wrapped silage bales grass mixed clover and alfalfa. 2nd & 3rd cutting. Extra wrapped \$35. 413-527-4104.

For sale: J.D. corn binder with side deliver elevator. Field ready. Use for corn shocks. \$2,000. 508-883-2754. No Sunday calls.

Bouldin & Lawson maxi flat filler in like new cond. Original owner, approx 10 years old. Lightly used for a retail greenhouse operation. Worth \$11,000 new, will sell for \$4750 or B.O. Ask for Al. 781-444-2351.

Goats For Sale: 2yr. old Reg. Togg doe-great milker, 3 mo. old Reg. Togg buck from 4-H herd, 508-867-9735.

Four 3" irrigation valves \$145, JD M Sidedresser \$225, Bucket 66" \$125, JD Fabric Cab-full size \$70, 8' non-slip truck bed mat \$20. (860) 627-5177.

Cape Cod Cranberries- The best quality berries direct from our bogs. For your farm stand and wholesale needs. 1 and 3 lb. bags and 30 lb. boxes. Antique wooden cranberry boxes to loan for your store displays. P.J. Cranberries, P.O. Box 417, Sandwich, Ma. 02563. 508-888-7676. e mail to pjcran@prodigy.net.

For sale: quality feed. Early cut silage bales. \$35 and down. Appx 200 ton corn silage \$32, your truck. Ground ear corn. Stephen Bashista, 413-527-4104.

Highly successful fish-based fertilizer now available. Approved for organic farming by ORMI. Particularly suitable for vegetables and small fruits. Bio-Stimulates, Inc. Jay Tripp, 1-508-789-4145, Jay111745@aol.com.

Subscribe to the New England Farm Bulletin. \$17/year includes 2 free farm classifieds or \$17 in free information booklets, monthly publication, annual almanac, New England fairs and farmers' market directory, monthly farm classifieds and features, access to rare farm topics and more! NEFB, Dept. MA, PO Box 67, Taunton, MA 02780.

How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. Limit: 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one ad per business/individual per issue, unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting.

Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed copy to: Farm & Market Report, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, 617-626-1752 fax: 617-626-1850, e-mail: Diane.Baedecker@state.ma.us

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Diane Baedeker Petit, Editor, Farm & Market Report

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

Brookwood Farm Hay Days

Do you have a farm-related service or activity? If so, you are invited to participate in a fun public event. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Blue Hills Reservation in Milton is hosting Brookwood Farm Hay Days on Sunday, October 14, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm.

This free family event celebrates the harvest season and the beauty of Brookwood Farm, a former sheep farm nestled against the scenic backdrop of Great Blue Hill.

Organizers are looking for exhibitors and vendors of farm produce, petting zoos, pony rides, hay rides, and antique equipment. Space is limited.

Contact Maggi Brown, MDC Blue Hills
Reservation, 617-727-4573. ♦

calendar 2001

September 14-30 – Eastern States Exposition (The Big E), West Springfield.
24 hour Information: (413) 787-0271, e-mail info@thebige.com, or visit www.thebige.com.

September 22-23 – 4th Annual Exhibition & Sale of Heritage Breed Livestock, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm at Hancock Shaker Village, Rtes 41 and 20, Pittsfield. One of the country's largest exhibits of historic and rare livestock and poultry, with traditional fair activities. Village admission includes entry to the exhibition. Call 413-443-8356 or visit www.nehbc.org.

September 24 – Beautiful Bountiful Berkshires Dinner 6:30 pm at Eastover Resort, Lenox, MA. Open to the public by reservation only, the always sells out, so book your reservation now! Tickets: \$25 farmers, \$40 members, \$50 non-members. For ticket information and reservations call Laurie Cadorette: 413-445-7786

September 29 – Harvest Fest, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at Natick Community Organic Farm, Rte. 16, Natick. Educational activities, crafts, games, hay rides, music, animals. Admission \$4 for adults, \$2 for seniors, children under 17 free. Call 508-655-2204 or visit www.natickfarm.org.

September 29-October 8 – Topsfield Fair, Topsfield. Call 978-887-5000 or visit www.topsfieldfair.org.

October 5 – Annual Stockbridge School Field Day at UMass Amherst to acquaint prospective students with Stockbridge programs. Contact the Stockbridge School office at 413-545-2222, e-mail stocky@fnr.umass.edu, or visit www.umass.edu/stockbridge

October 13 – Oktoberfest, 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm at Nashoba Valley Winery, 100 Wattaquadoc Hill Road, Bolton. Hand-crafted beers, German fare, and traditional German music. Call 978-779-5521 or visit www.nashobawinery.com.

November 18-20 – The Soul of Agriculture: New Movement in New England Food and Farming at the New England Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH. Contact the Office of Sustainability Programs, University of New Hampshire, (603) 862-2640 or Elhafiz@aol.com.

USDA Compiles Direct Marketing Bibliography

USDA has published a new edition of its "Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography." The 2001 edition contains more than 70 new entries and three new categories of published information from numerous sources including private industry, academia and state and federal governments.

The bibliography is available on line at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/bibliography.htm> or write/fax Velma R. Lakins, Wholesale and Alternative Markets Program, USDA Room 2644 South, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-0269, fax: 202-690-0031. ♦

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